GreenPower News

A weekly update from Western's Renewable Resources Program covering green power, reports and studies and funding.

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Green Power

First Walmart, then Verizon - and now a how-to guide for divorcing your utility

Last month we explained how Walmart's power plans have some challenging implications for the current utility business model.

This week Verizon announced its divorce plans. It will invest $100 million in a solar and fuel-cell energy project the company says will help power 19 of its facilities in seven states across the country. When completed next year, Verizon says it will annually generate more than 70 million kilowatt hours of its own green energy. Read more. *Source: SmartGrid News, 5/2/13*

Floating Wind Turbines With Underwater Storage Could Be Key To Viable Industry

Offshore wind power, attractive for so many reasons but right now rather expensive, could get another notch in its plus column under an MIT scenario that calls for the addition of utility-scale storage literally under the turbines.

"Storage spheres" — giant concrete canisters — are the key to what the MIT researchers call the Ocean Renewable Energy Storage (ORES) system.

The idea is that when offshore turbines are producing more electricity than the grid needs – overnight or on weekends, for instance, when demand is slack – power would be used to pump seawater out of the hollow spheres placed at the seafloor beneath the turbines. When extra power is needed, the system would take advantage of hydrostatic pressure, opening up to suck water back into the spheres, with the water passing through a hydropower turbine to generate electricity. Read more. *Source: Huffington Post, 5/1/13*

Energy 101: Marine and Hydrokinetic Energy on YouTube

Watch this educational video to see how marine and hydrokinetic technologies harness the energy of the ocean's waves, tides, and currents and convert it into electricity to power our homes, buildings and cities. *Source: US Department of Energy, 4/29/13*

EPA updates list of organizations using renewable energy

U.S. EPA's Green Power Partnership released updated list of Top 50 organizations using electricity from clean, renewable sources. Intel Corporation, Microsoft, and Apple, Inc. rank in top 10. Agency also released list of 47 partners committed to purchasing green power for 5 yr or more, including 15 higher education institutions. Also, EPA held College and University Green Power Challenge for 7th year, with University of Pennsylvania in lead. Read more. *Source: Thomasnet, 4/30/13*

New battery design could help solar, wind power the grid (Video)

Researchers from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory and Stanford University have designed a low-cost, long-life "flow" battery that could enable solar and wind energy to become major suppliers to the electrical grid.

The research, led by Yi Cui, a Stanford associate professor and member of the Stanford Institute for Materials and Energy Sciences, is a product of the new Joint Center for Energy Storage Research (JCESR), a DOE Energy Innovation Hub. Led by Argonne National Laboratory, with SLAC as major partner, JCESR is one of five such Hubs created by the Department to accelerate energy research and was established last November. Read more. *Source: PennEnergy, 4/29/13*

Visit U.S. DOE EERE Green Power Network for more information.

Reports, studies and policy

Follow energy policy with AEL Tracker database

The Advanced Energy Legislation Tracker database contains information for advanced energy legislation across all 50 states for free to any user. Legislation is organized into the following policy categories:

1. Electricity Generation
2. Energy Efficiency
3. Financing
4. Regulatory
5. Natural Gas
6. Emissions
7. Transportation
8. Infrastructure
9. Economic Development
10. Other Energy

In total, the Tracker database provides current legislative language, recent actions, bill sponsor information, and policy trend analyses. *Source: Advanced Energy Legislation, 5/20/13*

Download presentations from DOE Geothermal Technologies Office Peer Review

Workshop presentations from the 2013 Peer Review Meeting on April 22-25, 2013 are presented by track, following the order in the Overview Agenda. Read more. *Source: DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 5/15/13*

CPUC-DOE High Penetration Solar Forum 2013

The jointly sponsored forum was held Feb. 13-14, 2013, to address the California Public Utility Commission's California Solar Initiative goals as well as the DOE SunShot's strategic goal to make solar energy cost-competitive with other forms of electricity by the end of the decade. Presentations from the grid integration awardees of both programs are featureed. Read more. *Source: California Public Utilities Commission, 5/15/13*

Connecting to the Grid IREC newsletter for May 2013 now available

Interconnection: A Foundational Policy for Solar Market Expansion

Here at IREC, we work on the foundational issues that facilitate solar market growth. These issues, such as interconnection procedures, net metering and permitting guidelines, may not be the latest "hot topics" but they are nonetheless crucial to a thriving solar market. It's akin to renovating an old house – you can install granite countertops and new appliances but if you don't maintain the foundation, people probably won't want to move in.

To increase our impact on these foundational policies, IREC spends a lot of time researching best practices and forming them into model language that can be widely used and adopted. Policymakers can't be experts in every subject, so models provide a much-needed roadmap to help them navigate and understand the complexities of solar policy, especially in such a technically dense subject as distributed generation (DG) interconnection. Read more. *Source: Interstate Renewable Energy Council, 5/13/13*

NWCC Wind Wildlife research meeting IX proceedings online

The National Wind Coordinating Collaborative's biennial Wind Wildlife Research Meeting provides an internationally recognized forum for researchers and wind-wildlife stakeholders to hear contributed papers, view research posters, and listen to panels that synthesize the most recent wind power-related wildlife research. Download the proceedings from the 2012 meeting. *Source: National Wind Coordinating Collaborative, 5/11/13*

The Climate Change in the American Mind Series - Spring 2013

This is a report based on findings from a nationally representative survey conducted by the Yale Project on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. Interviews with more than 1,000 people were conducted April 8 - 15, 2013, througout the United States. The research was funded by the Surdna Foundation, the 11th Hour Project, the Grantham Foundation, and the V.K. Rasmussen Foundation. Read more. *Source: Center for Climate Change Communication, 5/13/13*

Governors' report highlights state clean energy activities

States across the country are working to increase energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and explore other clean energy resources as part of a diverse approach to meeting the nation's energy needs. Every state is working to advance clean energy measures in one or more areas; however, there is not a one-size fits all approach. States modify programs to reflect their own context and capture new thinking. Clean energy efforts usually fall into the following categories: clean electricity; energy efficiency; green economic development; Lead

by Example (greening state government facilities and operations); alternative fuels and vehicles; greenhouse gas emissions; and research and development. Actions can span a range of policy, regulatory and voluntary efforts. Read more. *Source: National Governors Association, 5/3/13*

Solar to Account for Almost All New Generation in California System in 2H 2013

Are we getting a lumpy renewable energy portfolio?

Almost all of the new generation capacity in the California transmission system operator's queue for the second half of 2013 is solar — 97 percent, to be exact.

There are 1,633 megawatts of new generation capacity in the 2H 2013 queue, according to the 2012 Annual Report on Market Issues and Performance from the California Independent System Operator (the ISO). Of that, 1,581 megawatts are new solar and 52 megawatts are biomass. Read more. *Source: GreenTech Solar, 4/30/13*

Register for NWCC research webinars

In 2013, National Wind Coordinating Collaborative is hosting a series of webinars featuring presentations on the latest wind-wildlife research. Read more. *Source: National Wind Coordinating Collaborative, 4/29/13*

ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives-USA is a membership association of cities & counties committed to climate action, clean energy, and sustainability. ICLEI offers regular trainings to help local government staff quickly learn the fundamentals of climate action planning, including how to complete a greenhouse gas emissions inventory, set GHG reduction targets, and use our tools to develop a targeted climate action plan. Recordings from previous training events are also available. Read more. *Source: International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, 5/11/13*

Updated guide to commercial property-assessed clean energy (PACE) financing available

The property-assessed clean energy (PACE) model is an innovative mechanism for financing energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements on private property. PACE programs allow local governments, state governments, or other inter-jurisdictional authorities, when authorized by state law, to fund the up-front cost of energy improvements on commercial and residential properties, which are paid back over time by the property owners. Read more. *Source: DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 5/9/13*

Guide to Community Energy Strategic Planning

This guide introduces the Community Energy Strategic Plan (CESP) approach, a step-by-step process for creating a robust strategic energy plan for your government and community that can help save money, create local jobs, and improve our national security.

The guide offers tools and tips to complete each step and highlights examples from successful planning efforts around the country. Local governments and community stakeholders can use the CESP framework to build on initial energy successes by moving from single projects and programs to a comprehensive, long-term energy strategy that delivers benefits for years to come. Read more. *Source: DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 5/1/13*

Guide from DOE weatherization program lays out measurement process

Designing a Benchmarking Plan provides a framework for developing an internal benchmarking plan. The outline walks through the various stages of the benchmarking planning process, providing tips and resources to help support organizations at each stage. Not all organizations will choose to implement each stage; however, each section is useful for consideration. Read more. *Source: DOE Weatherization Information Program, 5/1/13*

Past WIP webinars available online

The Weatherization Information Program Solution Center offers live webcasts that fit your schedule, or on-demand webcasts and pre-recorded training presentations to view at your convenience. You can choose your time zone as well and filter the list by week, month, webinar series, eligible activity or topic, or presenter. Read more. *Source: DOE Weatherization Information Program, 5/1/13*

EPRI report explores value of hydropower in US

Quantifying the Value of Hydropower in the Electric Grid: Final Report summarizes findings of the study and defines the current state of hydropower in the U.S. including market structures and operational experiences. Ten opportunities to increase or further capture the value of hydropower through operations, technology, and markets are defined. Read more. *Source: DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, 5/1/13*

Geothermal Energy's Environmental and Health Benefits Worth $117 Million Annually

Benefits of geothermal energy touted in air emissions analysis

The Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) has released an Air Emissions Comparison and Externality Analysis showing geothermal energy provides significant benefits to public health and the environment as one of the least-polluting and most environmentally friendly forms of energy. The analysis found binary geothermal plants produce virtually no greenhouse gases (GHG) and dry steam and flash geothermal plants put out only trace amounts of emissions. It estimates the public benefits from clean energy produced in California and Nevada are worth more than $117 million annually. Read more. *Source: Geothermal Energy Association, 4/25/13*

Find more publications and webinars.

Funding

Energy Department Announces $7 Million to Promote Clean Energy in Tribal Communities

The Energy Department today announced up to $7 million to deploy clean energy projects in tribal communities, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting economic development on tribal lands. The Energy Department's Tribal Energy Program, in cooperation with the Office of Indian Energy, will help Native American communities, tribal energy resource development organizations, and tribal consortia to install community- or facility-scale clean energy projects. Read more. *Source: DOE EERE News, 5/1/13*

Find more funding sources.